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**JOB EXCHANGE**

# **CAREER FAIR**

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**JOB INTERVIEW**  
**PRACTICE WORKBOOK**

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# Interview Preparation Checklist

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## Before the Interview

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- Make sure you know: the company name, interview location (online or physical) and time, and name and position title of the interviewer.
- Do online research about the company mission and culture, position description, and expected salary. Check the company website, LinkedIn, Glassdoor.com, Google, etc.
- Prepare anecdotes/stories about your successes, failures, work ethic, etc., because they WILL ask.
- Prepare intelligent questions to ask the interviewer - convey your drive to learn about the company and position, and to be a good employee and ease the employer's pain points.
- Choose your outfit at least 1 day in advance- and try it on!
- Have a copy of your resume available for yourself and ready to send to anyone involved in the interview process.
- Have a pen and paper ready to take notes of important info you learn during the interview.

# Interview Preparation Checklist

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## During the Interview

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- Smile! Practice if you have to because this is an essential skill.
- Focus on your strengths.
- Pay attention and focus on what the interview is saying/asking.
- Take notes.
- Review the questions you prepared and ask the most relevant ones.
- Ask what the next steps are in the interview process (try to get a time table so you know when to follow up), and ask if they will notify you either way.

## After the Interview

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- Write a thank you letter/email within 24 hours! Include all personnel who conducted your interview.
- Follow up (based on the time table they gave you during the interview, or that you identified in your thank you letter).

# Practicing Common Interview Questions

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## 1. Tell me about yourself.

This is undoubtedly the most common opener question in any interview. It may not even be a question- it could be, "So, tell me a little bit about yourself."

The important thing to remember when answering this question is that the employer is only looking for information about your professional life, not your personal life. Keep age, marital status, religion, etc. out of your answer.

You'll want to illustrate 3 or 4 important things about your professional life that will showcase positivity. **Name a few of your best attributes or an accomplishment you're proud of.** This is a great time to utilize part or all of your 'elevator pitch.'

## Now You Practice:

## 2. Why are you interested in this position?

Another way to say this could be, "Why do you want to work for us?"

This is the perfect opportunity to show off what you know about the position and the company. Hopefully you've done your pre-interview research and you can speak genuinely about why you are interested in the position.

If you can find a way to **show that you feel a personal connection to the company** and what they stand for, that can be helpful. Employers know that people who believe in the company they work for are hard-working and more loyal than people who are just there to collect a paycheck.

Take a cue from their website or any other reliable source of information and use this as an opportunity to show what a good fit you are for the company.

### Now You Practice:

### 3. What are your short- /long-term goals?

Again, remember to keep things professional.

When answering this question, try to highlight your strengths and positive attributes as they relate to the position.

Emphasize your desire to create a stable environment in a position where you can contribute successfully while continuing to learn and grow as a professional.

If you have a desire to continue taking on additional responsibilities or eventually move into management, be sure to say so in a way that is humble and doesn't seem to say that you are looking to take over the job of your interviewer.

#### Now You Practice:

*Short Term:*

*Long Term:*

## 4. How do you handle conflicts with co-workers?

Most companies are interested to know how you will interact with their customers/clients, or at the very least with your coworkers.

When discussing how to handle conflict, it is important to remember that customer satisfaction is the ultimate goal, and that excellent listening and communication skills are usually the best tools to get you there.

If you can remember a specific time when you handled conflict well and were able to get a good outcome, then definitely prepare that story before going into an interview. If you don't have a specific story to tell, you can speak in general terms about how you would handle such a situation.

### Now You Practice:



## 5. What can you offer us over your competition?

This is your time to shine! This is similar to the question about your strengths, but this one adds a bit of a competitive edge.

Remember that research you're supposed to do on the company and the position?

That's going to be the best way for you to be sure you're answering this question correctly. Be sure that whatever answer you give matches what they say they are looking for in a candidate, as well as the company culture. And don't just pick something generic.

Do some good reflective analysis on yourself as an employee and really try to explain what makes you unique.

### Now You Practice:

# 5 Must-Ask Questions to Impress Your Interviewer

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There's nothing worse than getting to that point in the interview when the interviewer says, "Well, that's all the questions I have for you. Do you have any questions for me?", and just drawing a blank because you didn't prepare.

If you're anything like me, that'll happen once and only once before you wise up and make sure you prepare for that moment in every future interview for the rest of your life!

Interviewing isn't just about the employer getting to know you, it is also about you getting to know the company/position, and assessing your potential fit and interest. Coming to an interview prepared with questions is as essential as coming to an interview well-dressed and with your resume; in other words, it's a must.

Asking the right questions will help you impress your potential employer with your commitment, interest, and thoughtfulness.

To help you prepare, we've compiled five must-ask questions at your next job interview:

## 1. What do you think is the biggest challenge of this position?

Often in interviews, both sides are trying to present the most positive image they can. This question not only gives you the opportunity to judge the full breadth of the position you are applying for (the good and the bad), but it also says to the interviewer that you want to be successful in the position and you want to prepare for potential challenges ahead of time.

## 2. What accomplishments/progress do you expect from me/this position in the near future?

Ask this question to get familiar with what kind of goals you might need to start working toward right away. Know where you'll be going right off the bat, and you'll have a chance to impress your new managers, colleagues, etc. by hitting the ground running. This question also shows the interviewer that you're a "go-getter" and ready to do what it takes to make progress with the program.

### **3. What are your goals for the company/branch/department (depending on who you're talking to) in the near future, and how does this position support those goals?**

Ask this question to get familiar with where the company stands, where it's going, and how you can be a part of its future. This is a good opportunity to show off the research you should have done prior to the interview. Asking this question will show that you're knowledgeable of and interested in the company, plus help you envision what opportunities may await you at your potential job.

### **4. Do you have any concerns about my skills or ability to perform well in this position?**

This is a better way of saying: "Do you think I'm a good fit?" This question will give you some insight into what the interviewer is thinking about your qualifications at this point in the hiring process.

It will also give you the opportunity to address any problems immediately and potentially alleviate an interviewer's concerns.

Keep in mind that some concerns, like lack of experience, are not always fixable; however, if you consistently refer to your hands-on experience from your education, you can sometimes prove your skill and qualifications for the position.

### **5. What are the next steps?**

This question is crucial! Ask the interviewer where he or she is in the hiring process and what the next steps will be.

Make sure to find out the best method (and time) to get in touch — can you call? Do they prefer email? You'll get a better idea of the timing and when you might expect to hear from the company, or when a good time would be to follow up. Always, always follow up.

# The Art of the Thank You Letter

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The #1 most over-looked etiquette tip for interviews is writing a thank-you letter. Many modern job seekers are neglecting this tool in their job search, to their detriment.

Most HR professionals will tell you that any candidate who sends a thank-you letter after their interview gets first consideration.

So, if you are looking to give yourself an advantage above the other job applicants, then **be sure to follow up your interview by writing a letter showing your genuine appreciation for the opportunity.**

Your letter should be written and sent within 24 hours of the interview, and sent to all people who were involved in the interview, or at least the highest-ranking interviewer. While a hand-written letter is an extremely nice touch, sending through traditional mail takes far too long to be effective in today's fast-paced world.

**Sending your letter via email is perfectly acceptable.**

Writing to the employer is another way to showcase skills and competency in communication and your career, so be sure your letter is understandable, easy to read, and professional.

Don't be afraid to personalize the letter and let your personality come through. It's also a good idea to mention something specific that you talked about in the interview, either to add more detail, or just remind them exactly who you are.

## The letter format should include the following:

**First**, express your sincere appreciation for the interview:

*“Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today.”*

**Second**, reemphasize your best qualifications for the position requirements:

*“After speaking with you, I feel even more confident that my [insert skills] make me an excellent fit for this position.”*

**Third**, reiterate your enthusiasm and interest in the job. At this time, you may want to offer additional information not previously given.

*“As discussed, I'm very excited about the opportunities to do AAA and BBB in this position. Beyond that, I can also bring XXX and YYY skills to the role.*

**Fourth**, once again mention your appreciation:

*“Thank you again for the opportunity to showcase my qualifications for and interest in the [position] at [place]. I look forward to hearing from you soon.”*

# QUESTIONS?

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